

## Statement of faith for membership 2023

The following articles represent our general shared belief as followers of Christ coming together to form a church. These are the doctrines that we protect and teach as The Gates Church. We also subscribe to the Baptist Faith and Message document created in 2000 as we cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention.

**Scriptures** – We believe the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are God’s completed revelation of Himself that hold truth and foundation for all truth. We believe the Scriptures are the infallible, inerrant, and inspired Word of God. Scriptures are truth that lead us to God’s will for our lives and to the good news of Christ for salvation.

(Deut. 4:1-2; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)

**God**- We believe in the one true God of the Bible who has eternally existed in three persons, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He created all that we know for his own glory. We believe that he is holy, sovereign, good, and everything that the Bible claims Him to be.

(Deut. 4:6; Is. 7:14; Eph 4:30)

**Man**- We believe humanity was created in the image of God as the triune God’s crowning achievement. We affirm that God created humanity in two distinct yet equally glorious genders (male and female). Mankind in nature and action has fallen into complete ruin because of sin, which is rebellion against God by breaking his commandments, causing us to fall under the full judgment and condemnation of God apart from reconciliation.

(Gen. 1:26-30; Psalm 51:5)

**Salvation**- We believe faith in Jesus Christ is the only solution for man’s ruin in sin, rebellion against God, and position of condemnation. Through our faith in Christ we are justified. Justification means that Christians are made right or reconciled with God because of the faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. Salvation includes regeneration which means that man is born anew by God’s transforming power. Sanctification is the part of salvation that describes the process where we are made more and more into the image of Christ throughout our life on earth. Our sanctification is made complete when we are finally glorified with God in heaven. These aspects of restoration of our relationship with God are only possible by our faith and repentance. We turn to Christ in faith and turn away from the sin of the world. In repentance and restitution we seek to make things right with those against whom we have sinned.

(John 14:6; Romans 8:29-39; Mark 1:15)

**Grace**- We believe our salvation and being made right with the Lord is a work of and gift from God, and not a work achieved by man. God is sovereign over the work of salvation and gives man the ability to trust Christ in faith alone. Man cannot earn God’s favor in the matter of salvation in anyway. Salvation is achieved through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.

(Eph 2:8; Rom. 6:23; Acts 4:12)

**The Church**- We believe that Christ has called out and collected his people to be together as his local church- a part of his universal church. The church seeks to be the main agent of spreading the gospel and kingdom of Christ, by proclaiming the truth of the gospel. Jesus is the head of the church and raises up elders and deacons for the work of ministry to equip the saints for ministry. According to the Scriptures, elders are to be men (not women) who lead the direction of the church and protect the truth of the gospel.

(1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Tim. 2:12-13)

**Denomination and Associations-** We believe that each church governs itself with the checks and balances of elders, deacons and congregation. The church should have no other authority over it except Christ alone. We are best defined as a Baptist church made up of people with many different religious backgrounds who have found a relationship with Christ that is greater than religion. We do believe that our autonomous, or self-governing, church should be involved in partnerships and associations of like-minded believers who partner together to achieve greater things for the kingdom of God.

**Baptism and The Lord's Supper-** We believe the practice of the Lord's Supper and Baptism are ordinances mandated by Jesus that point our church to the gospel. Ordinances are not sacramental means to grace, but powerful means to the gospel, as is the preaching of the Word. Baptism is the personal profession of faith of new believers but is done and received by the body with the guidance of the elders using the biblical mode of total immersion. The Lord's Supper should be done with regularity under the supervision of the elders and is for believers to partake in and for pre-Christians to experience by watching and hearing until they believe and embrace the gospel.

(Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:14-23; Eph. 2:8)

**Eskaton-** We believe in the imminent return of Christ. It will be visible, timely, and apocalyptic. The dead will be raised, and judgement will be dispensed by God. An eternal conscious hell of suffering and condemnation will be the destiny for the lost without Christ. An eternal home with God in unending joy and peace will be the destiny for those who know Christ.

(Rev. 22:12; Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:31-41)

**Gifts and Practice-** We believe that the Holy Spirit does gift the members of the church and equip them for the work of ministry. We allow for all the biblical gifts of the New Testament Church but must enforce correct use of gifts as instructed by the New Testament as we seek to be a church of order. We further believe that the Scriptures are the sufficient revelation of the triune God, and we will be scrupulous and skeptical concerning "new" words from individuals.

(Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 14:26-33; 2 Pet. 1:3)

**Evangelism and Missions-** We believe one of the primary callings of the church is to be sent to the world to proclaim the gospel to the lost, send the church and missionaries to other needy places, and spread the gospel to all nations. The church will maintain the integrity of the gospel by using the gospel and its resources to make new disciples in varying contexts. We believe missions should be oriented toward church planting. The church is sent, and healthy churches are the fruit or result of faithful evangelism.

(Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 9:19-23; Acts 13:1-3)

**Engaging Culture for God's Glory-** We believe God has called us to spread His glory to the end of the world and influence people and culture in God-honoring ways. Anywhere that those of the church live, work, play, and do anything should begin to be impacted by the influence of Christ. Every part of the Christian's life is the Christian life. While it is great to discern when we should be "separate" from culture or "transform" culture through politics or social action, we understand the main biblical imperatives that the church should practice are always hospitality and the ministry of reconciliation in all the places we gather and scatter in.

(Gen. 1:28; 2Cor. 5:16-21; Hebrews 13:2)

**Marriage, Family and Gender-** We believe that God ordained the family to be between one man and one woman, and therefore we do not affirm homosexuality or same sex marriage. We also do not affirm sexual sin in any form. God's plan for sexuality is only in His institution of marriage. While marriage is a great calling from the Lord, we see that being single is also a calling and full of spiritual benefits. Our church also holds to biblical

complementarian views of the only two genders. Male and female are equally glorious but functionally different.

(Mt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; 1Tim. 2:12)

**Life, Adoption and Abortion-** We believe life begins at conception, and therefore through abortions our country has murdered countless millions of children in the womb. Our church should be a prophetic voice against this great injustice, and we believe the church has a responsibility concerning orphan care. We also believe the same is true about social issues including geronticide.

(Jer. 1:5; James 1:27; Micah 5:8)

**Racism and Multiculturalism-** We believe that all humans are created in the image of God and therefore have profound value. God is glorified in the diversity of ethnicity and has built a kingdom with and for all ethnic backgrounds. We believe that God is most glorified when the church is made of people of different backgrounds involved in the local church. Therefore, we want to be a church that is hospitable to all people despite their ethnic background. Furthermore, we reject all forms of racism or beliefs that one ethnic background is superior.

(Gal. 3:28; Rev. 7:9; Acts 13:1)

## Membership Covenant or agreement 2020

This is a spiritual agreement that each member makes as he or she becomes part of The Gates Church. This document highlights the description of what we do and the duties of members of The Gates Church of Baltimore. The format below is displayed as an introduction, body, and conclusion. Key words are in bold.

- As The Gates Church of Baltimore, we who have
  - **Repented** of sin,
  - set our **faith** on the gospel of Jesus Christ,
  - and confessed the Lord in believer's **baptism** by immersion,
- do come together as a local body of Christ (1 Cor. 1:12) covenanting with the Lord of all, each other and ourselves to...
  - Pray for and continually pursue gospel **unity** in the church. (Eph. 4:11-13)
  - Intentionally consistently **care** for one another with compassion, discipleship, and biblical conviction. (Gal. 6:2)
  - **Gather** faithfully, biblically, and consistently as his people in our context for discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship. (Heb. 10:24-25)
  - Commit to **pray** for those in their maturation in the faith. (James 5:16)
  - **Share** the gospel message of hope with friends, family, and any who need salvation (Luke 19:10).
  - Fight, flee, and **deal with sin** and pursue righteousness and holiness together as the family of God (1 John 5:16).
  - **Submit** ourselves to the authority of the body and its leaders (Hebrews 13:17).
  - And understand that any one of us could fall under the **church's discipline** in the event of unwavering unrepentance that could result in removal from membership (Matthew 18: 15-17).
  - Joyfully give to **support** our church in our work of serving the body, making disciples, gathering for worship and discipleship, doing missions in the world and reaching out into our context. (2 Cor. 7:9)
- In good conscience and Biblical sincerity of heart, we covenant to be The Gates Church as we seek to glorify God and make disciples by gathering people in the name of Jesus to change our world,

I affirm and understand The Gates Church statement of faith and covenant with its members to be the church God has called us to be.

Name

Signed

date